

Queen Street Urban Park Hub Stage 1 - Concept Design

Stakeholder Engagement Report July 2024

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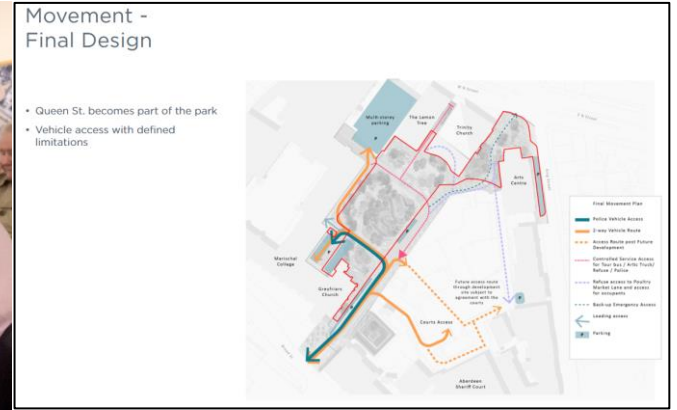
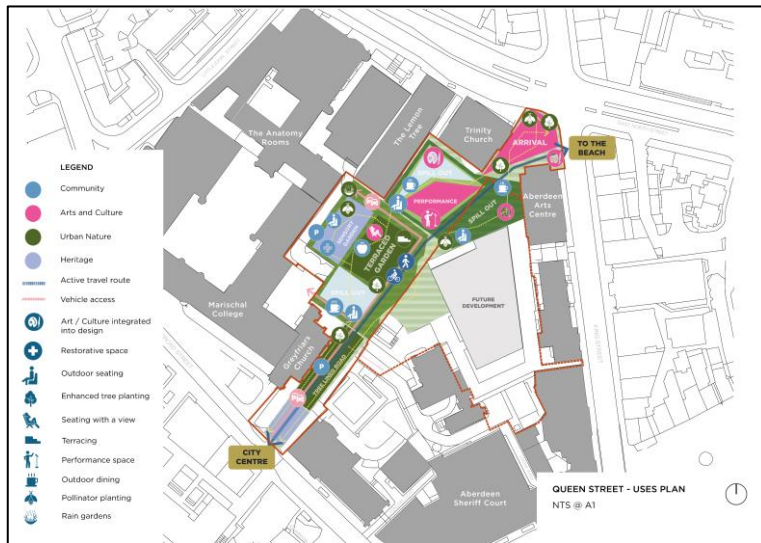
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Queen Street Urban Park

Background

The OBC approved by committee in September 2023 required community and stakeholder engagement to be undertaken as part of the development of the concept design for the new Urban Park.

In order to help the design team develop and evolve their initial high-level concept and to establish operational and functional parameters, a series of engagement events and meetings was established with neighbouring occupiers, key stakeholders and an all-female user workshop.



Neighbouring Occupiers

As highlighted on the Engagement Tracker, several organisations either back onto Queen street or have direct access requirements to Queen Street. These include Scottish Courts, Police Scotland, Trinity and Greyfriars churches, Aberdeen Arts Centre, The Lemon Tree and the tenants of the Assembly Rooms. A series of one-to-one meetings was arranged with each of these occupiers in February 2024 to outline and discuss the initial proposals and to better understand the current and future operational requirements of the occupiers, particularly in respect of access and egress for vehicles. There is a cluster of arts and culture organisations within this group of occupiers and they have a particular interest in how the park could add to the arts and culture offer in the City and also support the ambitions of each individual organisation. To this end, a follow up workshop was organised at the end of May to feed back progress with the design and to collectively discuss how the park, and the outdoor performance space in particular, could flourish. Following this meeting, occupiers with clear vehicular needs were provided with individual plans demonstrating how these needs would be met during each phase of construction. Satisfied that their operational needs will be met, the cluster of arts and culture organisations are very supportive of the proposals.

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Key Stakeholders

Workshops have been held with the Council Leadership Group and DEP and presentations provided to ACTUP, the Community Council Forum, Culture Aberdeen and Castlehill and Pittodrie Community Council. The City Centre Community Council is not currently operational. Technical engagement meetings have also taken place with all the relevant services within ACC.

Women and Girls

There is an increasing evidence base that girls and young women are being designed out of city centres in general and parks in particular. In attempting to ensure the urban park is as inclusive as possible, ACC and the design team strongly believed that a female-led engagement session would help identify the key priorities for women and girls and thereby help create a more accessible and inclusive space for all. With the help of Creative Learning's Young Ambassadors and Aberdeen Youth Movement, a wide selection of women and girls of all ages came together, mostly from Aberdeen Arts Centre and Citymoves. Hugely valuable feedback around topics including safety, lighting, seating, accessibility, inclusivity, feel and 'vibe' was gathered through a range of creative activities.



Women and Girls Intergenerational Workshop



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Next Steps

Following approval of the concept design report in August the planning application process will commence. Engagement activities during August and September will be expanded to involve;

- The general public – local residents and businesses, the arts and culture community, students and young people and other visitors to the City Centre will be encouraged to view the proposals online and provide their views through a survey. In addition, a public consultation event will be organised once the schools are back. This event will include a workshop involving representatives of all the above communities of interest to drill down into the finer detail of how the park should ‘feel’ and function.
- Key Stakeholders – Further sessions on the progressed designs will be organised with all the key stakeholders highlighted above and some of the stakeholders may also be involved in the charette.
- Neighbouring Organisations - Engagement will continue with all of the organisations with a presence on Queen Street. There will be a continued emphasis both on operational requirements and future use and curation of the different zones of the park, especially the performance space.
- Neighbouring Workforce – Sessions will be organised through ACC to engage will the workforce within Marischal College to understand the potential impacts of an adjacent urban park on working habits and preferences and how it could become a valuable amenity.

Reporting and Feedback

A Community Engagement Report will form part of the planning application and will capture all the engagement activities detailed above and the outputs. A ‘You Said, We Did’ section will highlight how the engagement feedback has influenced the design.



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